

Return to Use Initiative

2006 Demonstration Project

Celotex: Chicago, Illinois

THE SITE: The 24-acre Celotex site is a non-time critical removal site, 22 acres of which are cleaned up and ready for reuse. The property was used for making, storing, and selling asphalt roofing products. Soil at the site and surface soils in some nearby residential yards are contaminated with PAHs (polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons). PAHs are chemicals that form during the burning of coal, wood, oil and gas, and garbage. In 1989, Illinois EPA received citizen complaints about coal tar migrating onto their property from the Celotex site. Celotex removed all of the buildings on the site, and left the property without plant cover, which contributed to flooding of residences on a nearby street during a heavy rain. By August 1997, flooding issues were resolved by regrading the site and installing a new sewage drainage system. In 2002, Sacramento Corp. bought the Celotex property and placed at least 2 feet of gravel on about 22 acres of the site for company use.

THE OPPORTUNITY: Both the City of Chicago and local community members have expressed interest in using the site, located in the heart of Chicago, in a recreational capacity.

THE BARRIERS: EPA needs to engage local stakeholders in the environmental justice community to better understand the likely future use of the site in order to ensure the remedy is protective for that use. EPA also needs to understand the likely timing of the future use to make sure the reuse does not interfere with the cleanup of surrounding residential yards. Cleanup of the residential yards should be completed in 2007.

THE SOLUTION: EPA Region 5 plans to engage local stakeholders in an enhanced community involvement process to provide information about the environmental status of the site to the community and gain a better understanding of likely future uses.

THE SITE NOW: EPA is committed to working with the local community and understanding what future actions may be needed to ensure the remedy remains protective. Part of this involvement will entail consulting with the local community organizations and community leaders. The future users will need to consider how the site's current physical characteristics may impact available future uses.



Barriers: Understanding appropriate uses, working with stakeholders, involving community members with language barriers

Solution: Encouraging and facilitating open discussion between stakeholders; determining technical needs to properly design and reuse the site



Before: Vacant gravel lot in the "Little Village" community, just a few miles west of downtown Chicago

After: New recreational possibilities

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT: Tom Bloom, Region 5 Superfund Redevelopment Coordinator, at (312) 886-1967 or bloom.thomas@epa.gov.



Houses next to the Celotex site